

P.J. Ryan's Store  
135 West California Street  
Jacksonville  
Jackson County  
Oregon

HABS No. ORE-119

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. ORE-119

## P.J. RYAN'S STORE

Location: 135 West California Street, Jacksonville, Jackson County, Oregon.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The second brick store built by P.J. Ryan is among the latest of the surviving commercial buildings in Jacksonville. The first building on the site was a structure in which Alexander Martin and Lewis Zigler had their blacksmith shop. It was a frame building with a central doorway flanked by double-hung sash windows. The square front had a narrow cornice. The canopy across the walk had a flat roof and was supported along the street by square posts.<sup>1</sup> Martin and Zigler did not own the property, however, for in 1859 James Cluggage sold the lot to P.J. Ryan, in whose ownership it continued for forty years.<sup>2</sup>

The present structure was built in 1884. In September of that year, John Miller and P.J. Ryan signed an agreement permitting Ryan to insert joists and rafters into the east wall of Miller's store "for the new brick building to be erected by said P.J. Ryan on the lot of ground situated on the East of and adjoining the Lot and brick store building belonging to the said John Miller."<sup>3</sup> Miller also agreed to let Ryan extend the east wall southward, using about a foot of Miller's property for the wall, if Miller could use the extended wall free of charge. Ryan could also build on top of Miller's brick wall if he wanted to build a two-story building; if he dug a cellar, he would have to repair Miller's foundation and provide adequate drainage. Miller, in return, would try to "induce neighbors to make provisions for drains."<sup>4</sup> Ryan evidently started the building during 1884, since photographs of California Street with Cleveland-Hendricks campaign banners strung across the street show the building in the early stages of construction.

Although little is known about P.J. Ryan, he was one of the most active and successful merchants in Jacksonville. An early settler in the town, he owned the Palmetto Bowling Saloon, one of the earliest local establishments of its kind.<sup>5</sup> Probably aware of the desire of merchants for safer, so-called fireproof buildings, he built several brick buildings and purchased another.<sup>6</sup> In 1883, the Democratic Times reported that Ryan was building several houses for rental purposes, making him one of the few speculative residential builders in the town.<sup>7</sup>

The building that P.J. Ryan owned on the south side of California Street had several tenants before he constructed the brick building. In the late 1870s, Charles Savage had a saloon there;<sup>8</sup> in January 1879, Ryan leased it for two years to A. Fisher and Company, who had another store on the corner of California and Oregon Streets.<sup>9</sup> Two years later, it was leased to S. Cohen for a store.<sup>10</sup> In both leases, Ryan stipulated that improvements to the buildings would become part of the building, thus ensuring that he would benefit from the investment of his tenants.

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>  
Kuchel and Dressel, "Jacksonville, Jackson County, Oregon T[erritory]," 1856. This view of the town was distributed locally by W.W. Fowler and C.C. Beekman.

<sup>2</sup>  
Jackson County Deeds, June 18, 1859.

<sup>3</sup>  
Ibid., September 18, 1884.

<sup>4</sup>  
Because of underground streams, drainage of basements was a constant problem in Jacksonville (and remains so today). The problem was compounded by the removal of earth for mine shafts, which caused changes in the flow of underground streams.

<sup>5</sup>  
Jackson County Deeds, November 20, 1853.

<sup>6</sup>  
The P.J. Ryan Building on the north side of California Street was built before 1867; in 1868, he purchased the brick building known as the Ben Drew Commission House. See HABS Nos. ORE-118 and ORE-74.

<sup>7</sup>  
The Democratic Times, December 14, 1883. Other persons entered the speculative real-estate market by subdividing land and selling lots that other people would then build their own houses on. This is the only example identified of someone building speculative housing.

<sup>8</sup>  
Jackson County Deeds, January 7, 1879.

9

Ibid., January 7, 1879. The lease was recorded among the deed records of the County; while the recording of leases was not a standard practice, this is not a unique case either. This lease refers to the building recently occupied by Charles Savage as a saloon.

10

Ibid., July 9, 1881. Evidently Cohen had been a partner with Fisher in this particular store since the lease refers to the former Fisher and Cohen Store.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. Description of Exterior:

1. Number of stories: The building is two stories.
2. Number of bays: The first-floor facade has been extensively altered; the second-floor division into five bays probably corresponds to the original division of the first floor.
3. Layout, shape: The building is rectangular in shape.
4. Wall construction, finish, color: The walls are laid up in brick, which is presently of natural finish.
5. Openings:
  - a. First floor: The first-floor facade now has a central recessed doorway flanked by large display windows. Each leaf of the double wooden doors has an arched light above an octagonal panel. There is a transom light over the doorway.
  - b. Second floor: The five openings of the second floor are separated by brick piers and are spanned by segmental arches that form a continuous scalloped pattern. The piers have stepped capitals of four courses; the upper two courses form an abacus. The arches are three courses, with the center course of bricks laid in a pattern of alternating projecting and receding headers. The outer piers are wider than those between the windows, and the capitals are carried to the ends of the facade. The windows are four-over-four-light, double-hung sash.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape: The roof is flat, sloping slightly from north to south; it is hidden on the facade behind a parapet.
- b. Cornice: The entablature is returned on itself at each end of the facade. Above a frieze of projecting bricks is a dentil course of projecting and receding headers. This is capped by a single course that carries the cornice--several courses of projecting bricks set at an angle to the plane of the facade.

B. Description of Interior:

The interior has been remodelled as shop space for an antique store.

C. Site and Surroundings:

The structure is built on the north property line. It is located between one-story brick structures; since it was built after those structures, its second-floor exterior side walls rest on the top of the side walls of the flanking stores. The north (front) facade faces West California Street.

D. Original Appearance:

The original facade undoubtedly had multiple openings on the ground floor. There was probably a canopy that extended over the sidewalk in front of the store.

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